

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A computing system aiding in the operation diagnostic and maintenance functions of a remote computing devices, ~~the remote computing devices coupled to a network and running under a first boot image,~~ the diagnostic system comprising:

a plurality of remote computing devices coupled to a network, wherein each said remote computing device runs under a respective first boot image;

a process initiator, coupled to a user interface, that allows for the selection of a particular remote computing device;

a download director, ~~communicatively coupled to the user interface,~~ that controls a download of a maintenance boot image to the particular remote computing device via the network;

a ~~[[first]]~~ reboot director ~~that initiates connected to initiate a~~ ~~[[first]]~~ reboot process of the particular remote computing device ~~with the maintenance boot image;~~

wherein said process initiator, said download director, and said reboot director are connected such that, upon initiation by said process initiator, said download director downloads a temporary boot image to the particular remote computing device and said reboot director causes the particular remote computing device to reboot using said temporary boot image, then upon completion of a given task, said download director downloads said respective first boot image to the particular remote computing device and said reboot director causes the particular remote computing device to reboot using said first boot image.

~~a second reboot director that initiates a second reboot process of the particular remote computing device upon the occurrence of a predetermined event associated with the maintenance boot image prior to the second reboot process and operating with the first boot image subsequent to the second reboot process; and~~

~~the particular remote computing device performing diagnostic or maintenance functions under the maintenance boot image.~~

2. (Original) The system of claim 1, the process initiator further selecting a specific operational mode of the particular remote computing device.

3. (Currently amended) The system of claim 2, wherein the selection of a specific operational mode results in a download of a particular ~~[[new]]~~ temporary boot image from among a plurality of boot images.

4. (Original) The system of claim 3, wherein each of the plurality of boot images is operable to perform a particular maintenance or diagnostic task on the particular remote computing device.

5. (Original) The system of claim 3 wherein the plurality of boot images reside on a remote storage media.

6. (Currently amended) The system of claim 1 further comprising an operation monitor, the operation monitor monitoring the particular remote computer for the ~~occurrence of the predetermined event~~ completion of said task.

7. (Currently amended) The system of claim 6 wherein ~~the predetermined event is~~ notification of the completion of said task is a signal from the particular remote computing device ~~that a function associated with the operational mode associated with the maintenance boot image has been completed.~~

8. (Currently amended) The system of claim 1 wherein the process initiator ~~[[is a]]~~ receives an input through said user interface, ~~and an operator that~~ specifies the particular remote computing system.

9. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the process initiator is an independent diagnostic program, the independent diagnostic monitor initiating the selection of the particular remote computing device based upon specified criteria, the criteria of the remote system being monitored by the diagnostic program.

10. (Original) A method for diagnosing and maintaining remote computing devices the remote computing device coupled to a network and running under a first boot image, the method comprising:

selecting a particular remote computing device;

downloading a maintenance boot image to the particular remote computing device via the network;

initiating a first reboot process of the particular remote computing device with the maintenance boot image;

performing a diagnostic or maintenance function by running the particular remote computing device under the maintenance boot image; and

initiating a second reboot process of the particular remote computing device upon the occurrence of a predetermined event associated with the maintenance boot image.

11. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10, ~~the step of selecting further~~ comprising downloading a copy of said first boot image prior to said second reboot process.

~~selecting a specific operational mode of the particular remote computing device.~~

12. (Currently amended) The method of claim 11, ~~[[the]]~~ wherein said step of selecting a specific operational mode resulting in downloading additionally selects a particular new boot image from among a plurality of boot images.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein each of the plurality of boot images is operable to perform a particular maintenance or diagnostic task on the particular remote computing device.

14. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the plurality of boot images reside on a remote storage media.

15. (Original) The method of claim 10 further comprising:

monitoring the particular remote computer for the occurrence of the predetermined event.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein the predetermined event is a signal from the particular remote computing device indicating that function of the operational mode associated with the maintenance boot image has been completed.

17. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the step of selecting is performed by a user through a user interface, and the user specifies the particular remote computing device.

18. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the step of selecting is performed by a software program.

19. (Original) A computer program product in a computer usable medium for diagnosing and maintaining remote computing devices, the remote computing device coupled to a network and running under a first boot image, the method comprising:

- instructions for selecting a particular remote computing device;
- instructions for downloading a maintenance boot image to the particular remote computing device via the network;
- instructions for initiating a first reboot process of the particular remote computing device with the maintenance boot image;
- instructions for performing a diagnostic or maintenance function by running the particular remote computing device under the maintenance boot image; and
- instructions for initiating a second reboot process of the particular remote computing device upon the occurrence of a predetermined event associated with the maintenance boot image.

20. (Currently amended) The computer program product of claim 19, the instructions for selecting comprising:

instructions for selecting ~~a specific operational mode of the particular remote computing device~~ downloading a copy of said first boot image prior to said second reboot process.

21. (Currently amended) The computer program product of claim ~~[[20,]]~~ 19, wherein the instructions for selecting ~~a specific operational mode resulting in downloading~~ designate a particular new boot image from among a plurality of boot images.

22. (Original) The computer program product of claim 21, wherein each of the plurality of boot images is operable to perform a particular maintenance or diagnostic task on the particular Remote computing device.

23. (Original) The computer program product of claim 21 wherein the plurality of boot images reside on a remote storage media.

24. (Original) The computer program product of claim 19 further comprising:
instructions for monitoring the particular remote computer for the occurrence of the predetermined event.

25. (Original) The computer program product of claim 24 wherein the predetermined event is a signal from the particular remote computing device indicating that a function of the operational mode associated with the maintenance boot image has been.

26. (Original) The computer program product of claim 19 wherein the instructions for selecting allow for the interaction of a user, and the user specifies the particular remote computing device.

27. (Original) The computer program product of claim 19 wherein the instructions for selecting are responsive to signals from a software program.